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## SOME EARLY PIANOS IN PHILADELPHIA

BY ROGER G. GERRY, COMD'R. (D. C.) U. S. N.

It seems strange that almost no attention has been paid to the development of the piano in the United States in the literature dealing with the antiques of this country. Only one really authoritative book, Daniel Spillane's "History of the American Pianoforte," has been published on this subject, and it was written over 50 years ago. Spillane emphasizes the technical, rather than the antiquarian, aspects of the piano. Few, if any, articles have appeared in the periodicals which almost monthly offer one or more early pianos for sale, or describe them as the focal points in a period decoration plan. Numerous misconceptions exist, frequently among people who should be better informed. In some of the southern pilgrimages, pianos manufactured in the last quarter of the 19th century have been described as being at least "150 years old." A prominent west coast music dealer recently exhibited, in good faith, an 1888 Steinway square as "one of the earliest existing American pianos, about 150 years old." In view of its importance at that time as one of the cultural centers of the United States, it is not remarkable that Philadelphia should have been a leader in the development of the American piano during the late 18th and 19th centuries. However, before considering the influence of Philadelphia in the development of early piano manufacture, a short resume tracing the origins and history of the piano to that city seems to be indicated.

It is generally accepted that the first piano or pianoforte was made by Bartolomeo Cristofori, of Padua, in 1709. Father Wood, an English monk living in Rome, made a pianoforte similar to the Cristofori model in 1711 and later took it to England. Gottfried Silberman, a well known organ, harpsichord and clavichord maker, apparently influenced by German descriptions of Cristofori's instrument, made two pianofortes in 1726 which Johann Sebastian Bach pronounced failures. Since many of the early pianoforte makers originally made harpsichords, they used similar cases for both instruments. This influence is still seen in the shape of our grand pianos. Johann Zumpe, a German craftsman who had migrated to London, made the first square piano in that city, in 1760. This style piano case was to be the most popular for more than a century. At about this time, possibly because of the arrival of Johann Christian Bach in London in 1759, 12 German pianoforte makers settled in London and established a piano industry in that city.

One of the 12, Andrew Backers (d 1776) was the instructor of John Broadwood who later founded the still existent company of that name in London. Some of the descendants of these "12 apostles" later became indentified with the early development of piano manufacture in the United States.

Philadelphia had had probably more influence than any other city in the development of the American pianoforte. John Behrent, in 1775, produced there, the first pianoforte made on this continent, which he advertised as "an extraordinary instrument, by the name of the pianoforte, in mahogany in the manner of the harpsichord." John I. Hawkins patented the first "upright" in that city in 1800. One of these original Hawkins' uprights, in a case of Sheraton influence, is presently in the possession of John Broadwood and Sons, in London.

In 1825, Alpheus Babcock, at that time of Boston, but later of Philadelphia, invented the one-piece cast iron frame for the piano, a device which made possible the modern instrument with its increased string tension. The most significant Philadelphian stimulus, however, was the establishment of an annual piano exhibition by the Franklin Institute in 1824. The Franklin Institute no longer has an interest in pianos and has none on display. Since some of the pianos described below are located in homes under the cognizance of the Art Museum, it is possible that one or two were originally exhibited in the early Franklin Institute competitions.

The pianos described in the following paragraphs did not all originate in Philadelphia, although all are located there at present. Some have been included to show the casework of the grand pianoforte with its harpsichord influence, which was not often made by the early American piano makers, others have been included to demonstrate the casework of the Empire piano and to show a stage in the transition of the piano from its earliest form to its present design. In addition, some of the very important early Philadelphia piano makers, such as Hawkins and the Louds, have not been included because no examples of their work were found in, or near, Philadelphia. Some of the pianos described are still playable, the others could probably be made so at moderate cost. The very small early squares never had a quality of tone which approached that of the modern instrument, but nevertheless can provide charming accompaniment for early ballads. Some of the larger squares and the grand

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pianoforte do not have the range of the modern piano, but are very adequate for composers prior to, and including Beethoven. While their action and tone will not compare with those of the better modern pianos, they will equal or surpass the tonal qualities of some of the more moderately priced modern instruments, especially the modern spinet or small upright, with its short stringing. So far as the cabinet work is concerned, it is doubtful if any modern piano can equal the esthetic quality of the cases of these early pianofortes. For use in the period room, these pianos may furnish solutions to decorative problems as they are small in size as well as esthetically pleasing. Most early pianos are inexpensive because of the almost complete indifference of the casual pianist. Pianofortes with repairable actions are frequently salvageable. Most will require restringing and the fitting of oversize tuning pins to the wrest plank into which they are imbedded. These pianos should be acquired to be played on as well as looked at and admired but, if function is to be one of the requirements, should be purchased with the guidance of an expert piano technician. Usually the smaller technician who may accept the restoration of an historical instrument as a challenge to his ability will furnish more accurate guidance and satisfactory results than some of the larger shops which work on an hourly and sometimes piecework basis.

Charles Albrecht made two of the pianos described in this article. Albrecht started making pianos sometime before 1789, just a few years after John Behrent made the first American pianoforte. The Albrecht pianos were similar in design to those imported from England at that period, but showed some improvements over the English models. They were all squares as opposed to the earlier Behrent grand. Albrecht was listed in the Philadelphia city directory in 1791 as a joiner, but it is likely, as described below, that in his later years he did not make his own cases.

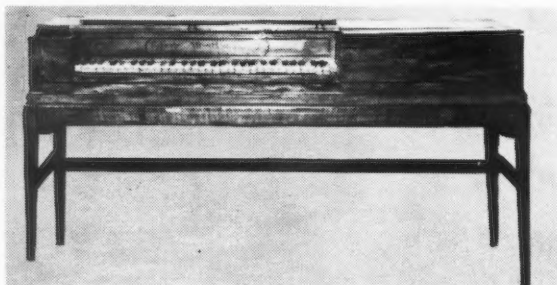


Figure 1. Oldest American piano extant. Built by Charles Albrecht in 1789. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Figure 1 shows the earliest American piano still in existence, a small square which is presently exhibited by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The case is of walnut in the Hepplewhite manner and is labeled simply "Charles Albrecht — Philadelphia — 1789." There are 61 keys, or five octaves, extending from F to F. The wrest plank and bridge are wooden, and the wrest plank is located on the player's right, as in the clavichord. The hitch-pins, which are located at the opposite extreme of

the strings from the tuning pins, are inserted into the wooden piano frame.

Figure 2 shows a slightly later piano by Charles Albrecht, which is located in "Strawberry" in Fairmont Park. The keyboard and stringing are similar to the earliest Albrecht, but the hitch-pin is not actually a part

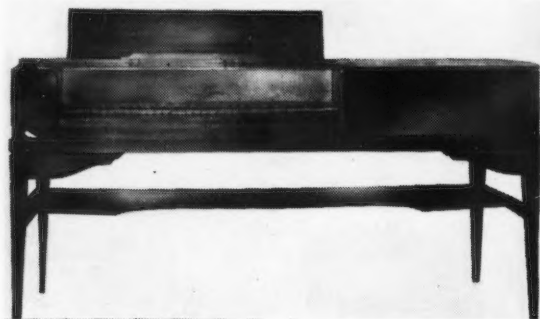


Figure 2. Later, more elaborate Albrecht piano. Case reputed to have been made by Savery. Located in "Strawberry," Fairmont Park, Philadelphia.

of the frame. The cabinet is of walnut, but is more elaborate than the earlier model. The nameplate is of inlaid tiger maple and the label is painted and decorated in the manner of the period. Sarah Dickson Lowrie, in her book "Strawberry Mansion" tells that this piano was bought by Judge William Lewis, second owner of Somerton (later Strawberry) for his wife, not because he expected to enjoy her playing, but because he was so greatly amused by the reply of the Quaker cabinet-maker, Savery, who, on being twitted for consorting with the devil by working on a musical instrument, commented, "It is as thee said but another invention of Satan, but I did not make the carnal parts."

Charles Albrecht was listed in the Philadelphia city directory until 1825, but probably retired in that year as he is described as a "gentleman." His son, Christian F. Albrecht, is listed until 1831.

The grand pianoforte in Figure 3 is located in the Mayor Samuel Powell House, which is presently maintained by the Philadelphia Society for the Preservation

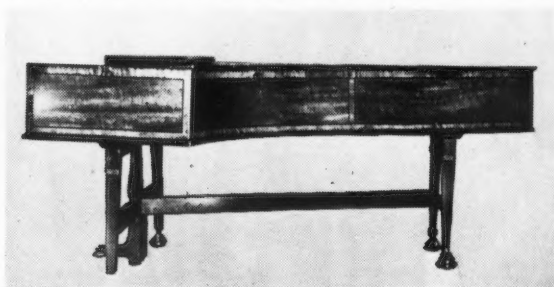


Figure 3. Grand pianoforte made by John Broadwood, in London, between 1791 and 1794. Presently located in the Mayor Samuel Powell House, Philadelphia. Courtesy of the Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks.

of Landmarks. This piano was made in London by John Broadwood, who, it was maintained earlier, was trained by Americus Backers, one of the "12 apostles." John Broadwood started making pianos sometime before 1780, and in that year succeeded in entirely reconstructing and improving the design of the square piano. One of his improvements consisted of moving the wrest plank from the player's right to the rear of the case. It may be recalled that the Albrecht pianos, which were made later, had the wrest plank on the right, as at that time Broadwood's improvement was still covered by his patent. Broadwood later decided to improve the grand piano and after consulting with not only scientists but almost all the great pianists of the period, about 1788, constructed a 5 octave "F" to "F" grand pianoforte. He improved this piano in 1791 by increasing its range to 5½ octaves, and again in 1794 when the keyboard was increased to 6 octaves. Broadwood and Company is still in business in London.

The piano shown in Figure 3 was made between 1791 and 1794. This date can be definitely established because the 5½ octave, F to C, keyboard was made by Broadwood only during that period. The wrest plank is at the front of the piano and the hitch-pins are inserted into the wooden frame at the player's right. The instrument is strung with three treble strings per hammer, as in the modern piano, instead of 2 strings, as in most of the contemporary pianos. There are also three pedals instead of two. The mahogany casework is inlaid with satinwood in a well proportioned Hepplewhite style. The piano is still playable except for tuning, but has apparently been recently rebuilt. This type of imported instrument was probably the pianoforte used by wealthiest families in the United States at the close of the 18th century.

Charles Taws arrived in New York from Scotland in 1786 and 2 years later migrated to Philadelphia where he started making pianofortes. It is not known whether he actually made any pianos before he settled in Philadelphia. He is listed in the Philadelphia city directory as a "musical instrument maker" from 1793 to 1833. He was succeeded in business by two sons, James B., and

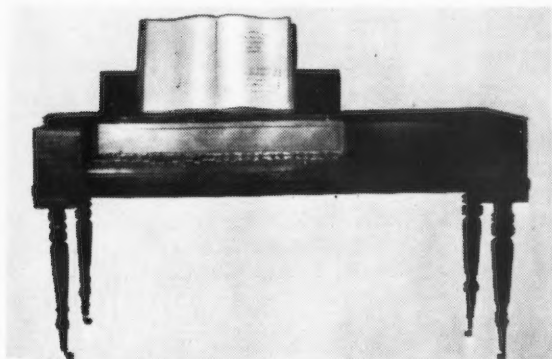


Figure 4. Small square pianoforte made by Charles Taws of Philadelphia. This piano is an advancement over the Albrechts, and can be dated ca. 1795. Presently located in "Sweetbriar," Fairmont Park, Philadelphia.

Lewis. The Taws square piano shown in Figure 4 is located in "Sweetbriar" in Fairmont Park. The Sheraton Case with reeded legs is made of mahogany with a maple nameplate bearing the legend "Charles Taws—Musical Instrument Maker—Philadelphia." It is not known whether the above spelling was used in labeling all his pianos, but the simpler spelling is the one which appears in the City Directory. The piano is strung with a five octave range using a 61 key "F" to "F" keyboard. The stringing is an improvement over that of the Albrecht squares in that the wrest plank is in the rear of the case following Broadwood's improvement of 1780. This pianoforte can be dated at about 1795. While Taws had a reputation of being an excellent instrument maker, it should be recognized that this piano is not as advanced as the 6 octave Broadwood pianofortes of the same date.

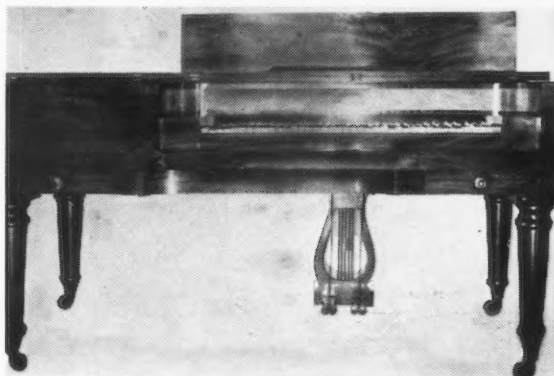


Figure 5. Square pianoforte made by C. Rosenbaum of Pittsburgh, ca. 1820. No information can be found concerning the manufacturer of this instrument which is presently located in the Hatfield House, Fairmont Park, Philadelphia. Courtesy Art Museum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Figure 5 shows a magnificently grained rosewood Empire piano located in the Hatfield House in Fairmont Park, and owned by the Art Museum in Philadelphia. The piano was made by C. Rosenbaum of Pittsburgh, of whom no record has been found. The keyboard is entirely of wood, and the wrest plank is located at the player's right, an arrangement which was long outdated by the time this piano was made, which seems to have been about 1820.

The piano shown in Figure 6 was made in New York by Robert Nunns, Clark & Co. This firm was started in 1824 by Robert and William Nunns who had come from London in 1821. They soon outdistanced the other New York manufacturers by improving the French action on which the modern piano action is based. In 1830 they took first prize for the best square at the first exhibition sponsored by the Mechanics' Institute of New York. They also made use of a radical, but markedly improved, system of stringing. In 1833, when they took first prize at the Franklin Institute Exhibition, R. and W. Nunns were joined by John Clark who had recently arrived from England and the name of the firm



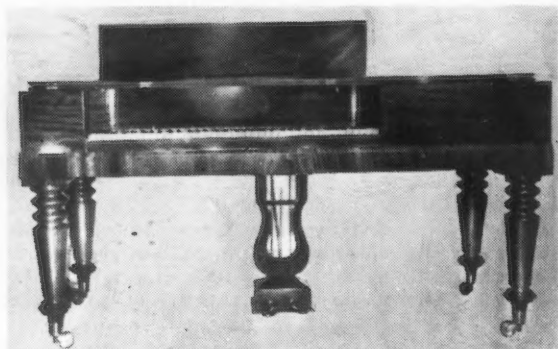


Figure 6. Robert Nunns, Clark & Company square pianoforte made between 1833 and 1838. This instrument was very advanced for its day, and is still in excellent playing condition.

was changed to Robert Nunns, Clark and Company, and so remained until 1838 when William Nunns withdrew. The firm was also the first to use the modern felt covered hammer which they introduced in 1851. Nunns and Clark continued as outstanding piano manufacturers until 1858 when they went out of business. In addition to the contribution made above, it should be mentioned that William Steinway, one of the original "sons" of Steinway and Sons, received training in their shop, and that William Nunns who withdrew from the firm in 1838, became a partner with J. & C. Fischer, a firm which is still manufacturing pianos.

The Robert Nunns, Clark & Co. piano illustrated was made between 1833 and 1838, the only dates between which that label was used. The case is of rosewood in the Empire manner and is somewhat less massive than it appears in the photograph as it is less than 6 feet long. There is a 73 key, 6 octave keyboard, extending from "F" to "F." The wrest plank is located in the rear of the case and is supported by a metal strip along its front edge. The hitch-pin plate is entirely of metal. This piano, the property of the author, is in excellent playing condition, and is used daily. It is probably a far more satisfactory instrument than any used modern piano purchased for an equivalent price.

Figure 7 shows only the brass nameplate of one of the most famous of the Philadelphia piano makers, Alpheus Babcock. The rest of the piano was broken up a few days previously by an antique dealer who wanted to use its finely grained rosewood to make a table. The Babcock brothers started in business in Boston in a small shop in 1810, and in about 1822, Alpheus invented his famous cast metal frame which was one of the most important single contributions to the development of the modern piano, as it made possible the tremendous tension required for modern stringing. This plate was patented in 1825. Alpheus Babcock's pianos ranked very highly from this date. In 1824, he won the prize for the best square piano in the opening exhibition of the Franklin Institute and in 1827 was awarded a prize at the same exhibit for a square piano with a cast metal frame. In 1829 Babcock moved to Philadelphia, and in 1830



Figure 7. Nameplate from Alpheus Babcock square pianoforte which was made between 1834 and 1836. Babcock was the most outstanding pianoforte maker of his time. This instrument was destroyed, a few days before this picture was taken, by an antique dealer who wanted to use the case to build a table.

took out a patent for a "cross stringing," the arrangement by which the bass strings are placed at an angle to the treble strings and without which the modern 88 note keyboard could not be feasibly made. It can be said with certainty that Babcock contributed the two most important elements of the contemporary piano. The piano from which the nameplate was taken was not one of Babcock's outstanding pianos as it had neither cast iron frame nor cross-stringing. However, it was repairable to a usable condition before its destruction. It was apparently made between 1834 and 1836, as both Babcock and Swifts' Piano Warehouse are listed in the Philadelphia city directory as being at 142 Chestnut Street during that period.

## LAMP BRUSHES

The quotation below from a letter to the Rushlight Club from Mr. Jay C. Johnson, of Baltimore, Maryland, adds another bit of evidence to our knowledge of the origin of devices connected with early lighting.

"I thought perhaps that you would be interested in hearing that it was Jacob Cummings Johnson who first invented the twisted-wire bristle brush in 1855. He made them on the south side of Mechanic Street a few doors east of Broad Street in the City of Newark, New Jersey. They were first used as lamp chimney cleaners..

"Having to keep the chimneys clean in a lamp store, and tiring of the dusty rag, he wondered why a brush couldn't do. But a wooden handled brush wasn't flexible enough to reach all sections of the different sizes in lamp chimneys.

"Borrowing some bristles from the brush maker at the Mechanic Street address, and with the use of a vice to hold the wire—he twisted the wire to secure the bristles.

"The cleaners were first given away with each order of lamps; the very first shipment going to a customer, South."

Mr. Johnson appended a pencil sketch showing a brush very much like a bottle brush sold by the Fuller Brush Co. at the present time."

Miner J. Cooper.

# Early American Industries

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## THE WYCKOFF PUMP

By THOMAS W. FENNEL

It seems but yesterday that everywhere you went you saw a wooden box-like pump. Everyone had one. You know the type I mean if you live in the East. It stood out as one of the first things you saw on the lawn of any farmhouse, any farmhouse, that is, that took pride in its dooryard or its lawn.

The wooden case of this well pump stood about three and a half feet high and had a knob on the flat top of its tapered body for the tumbler which always was there for the passerby and for the men on the farm. There was something inviting about that pump on a hot summer afternoon. It looked cool with its green coat of paint and just seemed to yearn to have its handle pumped.

The top of the pump had a sort of lattice work which itself sloped up at an angle and then flattened out on top to support the knob for the drinking glass. There was a handle on the side, made of iron, with a wooden grip, and there was a downward curved spout in front about a foot and a half from the ground. I say the ground, but actually most of these pumps were mounted on concrete, or, in the earlier days, a wooden well curb raised about a foot from the ground all around it for drainage. Looking at the pump more closely you saw the sprocketed wheel inside with the endless chain going over it and down into the water. And you might see one of the rubber cups which every five feet appeared in the chain to pull up the water thru the wooden pipe to the spout.

These pumps did not just happen. They were the product of the inventive genius of Arcalous Wyckoff who established a wood water pipe and pumps concern in Elmira, New York in 1855. He was attempting to save the tempers and the energies of the modern American of his day. He was the inventor of a type of pipe made of wood which found many uses besides being an integral part of the pump mechanism. The pipe was used extensively in mines because it was impervious to electrolysis and it almost never rotted. Several years ago some of this pipe was dug up in Washington, D. C., after having been in use under the ground at the capital for two generations. It was in perfect condition.

The plant was located on the south side of Elmira, N. Y., and was in existence up until 1946, having supplied wooden pipe to the Navy for the North African campaign. But recent developments and improvements in iron pipe having rendered the wood pipe obsolescent the company was dissolved. An era had passed.

During the last half of the nineteenth century every hardware store in the East carried Wyckoff pumps. The name never appeared on the case, the retailer having his own stencil cut with his name and place of business which were then painted on in gilt letters. They were very fine affairs. I can remember years ago seeing piles and piles of these pumps in the plant, the green ones on one side of the warehouse, the red ones on the other. They came in but these two colors with gilt decoration around the edges. The pipes came in various lengths and could be assembled on the spot by the farmer or the man

from the hardware company, each section fitting sleeve fashion into the other.

This was the procedure. You went in and ordered a new pump giving the depth of the well. The pump was delivered and the pipe and chain were assembled on the lawn. The chain was double the depth of the well, and, if the well was a deep one the little rubber cups were placed closer together than every five feet which was the usual spacing between them. These cups were washers shaped like toadstools and just a hair larger than the diameter of the pipe. The suction caused



by this arrangement drew up the water. Now, the pipe with the chain inside was lowered into the well by being hoisted straight into the air by the assembled throng and thrust down into the well to be fastened to the inside of the pump. The pump had already by this time been placed on the curb and the pipe secured to it by an iron band. Then the sprocketed wheel was placed on top on a small axle. Over this wheel went the endless chain with one side falling free into the well. The pump was ready to run.

Wyckoff pumps were widely sold in the last century all over the East, especially in New York and New England. There was also an office in Georgia. The Elmira plant had one of those eventful-uneventful histories. Founded over ninety years ago the company was continuously located in Elmira, New York, though in two different locations, moving when the company expanded. Wooden pipe was the first consideration as it was invented before the pump. Its manufacture was interesting. California redwood was used as well as our own native maple depending upon the size of the pipe to be turned out. The smaller pipe was made by reaming out the

(Continued on Page 36)

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## SOME NOTES ON AMERICAN PLANE MAKERS

BY HENRY J. KAUFFMANN

Many years ago at an auction in York County, Pennsylvania, I bought an old plane made of wood. My motive for buying it was not a practical one, for I did not expect to use it. As I now recall, I was intrigued by its shape and its good state of preservation. (Besides, it was cheap.)

Its most impressive feature now seems to be its beauty. It was made of a light colored hard wood such as birch or maple, and varnished for protection against the inroads of moisture which causes wood to expand and contract. The color is now a deep, rich brown which is greatly enhanced by the patina often obtained by old objects, especially those that are used by human hands.

Not only the color, but the shape of the tool is pleasing. The main body of the plane is delicately designed and executed. It seems neither too large nor too small, but is just right for its function and for holding. The adjusting screws for the fence are made of wood and the threads on them are perfectly executed. The retaining nuts are also made of wood and are beautifully turned and knurled. There is no evidence of a bad cut or any imperfection of workmanship. The guide, or fence, has a graceful ogee curve incorporated in a design that would be suitable for a moulding or trim on a fine case of walnut or mahogany drawers.

The metal parts are also well made. The cutting blade has an interesting finial on the top and is thickened toward the bottom so that added pressure against the blade causes a tighter fit in the block. The throat for the chips is shaped for function and beauty, and none of the iron parts are excessively rusted even after many years of neglect. Modern tools stored under conditions similar to those which this one experienced would be impaired almost beyond use. The brass thumb screw on the top is in excellent condition, and the threads show little wear. The brass plate which holds the thumb screw is inlaid perfectly in the top of the plane and provides an interesting color contrast with the other parts of the tool.

These latent qualities have always been in my mind, but an added factor has caused me to re-examine the plane and re-appraise my purchase. In recent years I have been concerned with the problem of identifying the makers of these old tools, and it was this curiosity that led me to investigate my plane again. Some fine abrasive cloth applied to the end of the iron, or blade, quickly revealed the name, Sandusky Tool Company. My hypothesis of American manufacture was quickly confirmed when I found on the fore end of the wood, Sandusky Tool Company, Ohio. What I had always regarded as a piece of European Craftsmanship now proved to be a fine and interesting American product. This discovery led me by mail to Sandusky, Ohio, but all that I could discover was that the company had been sold to another manufacturer and that neither of the two is now operating.

The result of my investigating will be a lengthened perspective of American craftsmanship. An open gap

between the craftsman and his product has been filled. In the past I have admired the architectural mouldings on famous buildings as well as the finer details of similar work in cabinet making. I have known the names of many men who made them. Now I know the tools with which they worked for I have examined many, and I know that they are equally fine and many are the products of American craftsmen. These dusty old tools in the museum and carpenter shop are important; they should be carefully labeled and displayed in a more interesting manner, particularly those of American production.

The investigation of the details regarding my plane made by the Sandusky Tool Company led me to examine the other planes in my collection as well as many in museums. The following is a partial listing of names as they were found. Some are foreign, others are American, and many are of unknown location.

<i>Name on Plane Iron</i>	<i>Name on fore end of wood</i>
Newbould	W. Vance
R. F. Mitchell	Greenfield Tool Co.
Warranted	Greenfield, Mass.
Cast Steel	
W. Butcher	E. W. Carpenter
Sandusky Tool Co.	Ogontz Tool Co.
Warranted	
Cast Steel	
W. Butcher	Ogontz Tool Co.
Warranted	
Cast Steel	
James Cam	G. Mayer
Warranted	Lancaster
Cast Steel	
W. Butcher	E. W. Carpenter
	Lancaster
W. Butcher	John Bell
	Phila.
W. Butcher	I. Carpenter (Pat. 1868)
Ohio Tool Co.	Scioto Works
L. Hollinger	E. W. Carpenter
	Lancaster
W. Butcher	B. Shenneman
Cast Steel	Market Street
Sheffield	Philada.
Shaw and Oates	Hill and Winship
Cast Steel	Springfield, Ms.
John Green	C. White
Warranted	



*Plane Made By Sandusky Tool Company*

James Cam	Butler, Phila.
W. Butcher Sheffield	J. Colton 247 S. 2nd St. Phila.
W. Butcher Sheffield	S. H. Bibighaus Philadelphia
Ohio Tool Company Thistle Brand High Grade Steel Auburn, N. Y. U. S. A.	Scioto Works
N. Gilbert	S. E. Bauer

My tentative conclusions are as follows: I believe that the making of plane irons was confined to a small group of craftsmen who were specialists in that field. The names of Butcher and Cam appear most frequently on the irons, but never on the parts of wood. The irons made by the specialists were probably bought by tool manufacturers and installed in the parts of wood which they made. The manufacturer's name was stamped on the end grain of wood, and sometimes their location was included.

There is evidence that most of these planes of wood were used in the mid-nineteenth century. A Lancaster Business Directory for 1856 illustrates one in a hardware advertisement with the usual long base, plane iron and wedge of wood. I examined one in the Landis Valley Museum with a patent date of 1868. This one had a thumb screw for fastening the iron instead of the earlier wedge of wood. These screws were probably used much earlier but I have found no documentary evidence to substantiate that fact.

## WILLIAMSBURG MEETING

The fall meeting of the Early American Industries Association will be held on October 30, 31 and November 1 in Williamsburg, Virginia with Colonial Williamsburg being the host for this meeting. M. W. Thomas, Jr. and William D. Geiger will serve as program chairmen. Full information will be forwarded to all members in the form of a letter in August and additional information will be contained in the October issue of *The Chronicle*. However for those who are anxious to make their plans in advance, the following information will be of help. The program will cover the full period October 30 - November 1st and will begin at 9:00 a. m. on the 30th. Members will find that the full three day period is necessary for a full coverage of the variety of exhibits that Colonial Williamsburg has to offer.

Rooms for 75 persons have been set aside in the Williamsburg Lodge for members of the Association and most of the group activities will take place in the Lodge Ball Room or in vicinity of the Lodge. Rates at the Lodge are as follows: Single \$6.00-\$8.00; Double \$8.00-\$13.00. Also near the restored area is the famous Williamsburg Inn. Rates at the Inn are as follows: Single \$9.00-\$17.00; Double \$13.00-\$21.00. For those members who prefer motor courts or tourist homes, Williamsburg has a large number within a mile of the restored area. Reservations can be made through the Chamber of Commerce, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Williamsburg is serviced by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad which has through trains to the West—St. Louis, Cincinnati, Louisville, Detroit, Cleveland and Columbus. Trains running South from Washington, D. C. make their connections with the Chesapeake and Ohio at Richmond. Williamsburg is accessible to air transportation. The major airlines come into Byrd Field in Richmond, only 50 miles from Williamsburg and to Patrick Henry Airport 13 miles from Williamsburg. There is limousine service from Patrick Henry to Williamsburg. Williamsburg is on US Highway 60 and can be reached from Washington, D. C. via US 1 from Washington to Richmond and US 60 from Richmond to Williamsburg. It is about a four hour drive from Washington to Williamsburg and about 10 hours from New York City. Your Editors hope that this information will be helpful in planning your trip.

A tentative program has been arranged as of this date to include visits to Colonial Williamsburg's nine operating crafts, the Cabinetmaker, the Apothecary, the Barber and Peruke Maker, the Printer, the Bookbinder, the Bootmaker, the Spinner and Weaver, the Blacksmith, and the Chandler. In addition special visits to the Colonial Williamsburg Archaeological Laboratory and the Wolcott Tool Collection are contemplated. The eight major Exhibition Buildings are also to be visited including the Palace, the Capitol, the Brush House, the Wytte House, the Magazine, the Raleigh Tavern, the Paradise House, and the Gaol.



# The Chronicle

## The Chronicle

Early American  
Industries Association, Inc.

The purpose of the association is to encourage the study and better understanding of early American industry, in the home, in the shop, on the farm, and on the sea, and especially to discover, identify, classify, preserve and exhibit obsolete tools, implements, utensils, instruments, vehicles, appliances and mechanical devices used by American craftsmen, farmers, housewives, mariners, professional men, and other workers.

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51 Paxton Street, Leicester, Mass.

M. W. THOMAS, JR., W. D. GEIGER  
*Editors of The Chronicle*  
Williamsburg, Virginia

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Communications regarding the contents of *The Chronicle* should be addressed to the Editor; regarding back numbers to Loring McMillen; suggestions for members to any of the Officers; all other matters to the President. Addresses as here given.

### DUES

The annual dues are payable January 1st, and are as follows. Active members \$5.00; Helpful members, \$7.50; Encouraging members, \$10.00; Enthusiatic members \$15.00, and Delighted members, \$25.00. There is no distinction between classes, except the amount of dues, but *The Chronicle* cannot be financed unless a considerable number of the members pay more than \$5.00. Each member is expected to voluntarily place himself in the class which represents the amount he is willing to contribute to the support of the Association for the current year. Life membership costs \$50.00. The *Chronicle* is sent to all members without additional charge.

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## SECRETARIES REPORT

JANET MACFARLANE

The Early American Industries Association, Inc. held a meeting at Shelburne, Vermont, June 26-28, 1953. The headquarters was the Shelburne Museum owned and operated by Mrs. J. Watson Webb, and for three days the buildings and exhibits were open to members.

On Friday evening dinner was held at Shelburne Harbour Inn with Mr. Frank Wildung speaking on the subject "Making the Wooden Plane." On Saturday there was an auction of tools and implements donated by members, which netted \$1,085.00 for the E.A.I.A.

Both the members' and directors' meetings were held aboard the sidewheeler *Ticonderoga* on which members cruised Saturday afternoon and evening.

On Sunday, the "What's It" session was held followed by a luncheon at which members were guests of Mr. and Mrs. J. Watson Webb.

At the Members' Meeting held at 4:30 p. m. Saturday, Mrs. Peirce reported that the organization has approximately 600 members, including 80 since the last meeting. Registration for the Shelburne gathering was 149. Directors elected for three years are: J. Sanger Attwill, Dr. Philip Batchelder, Lawrence S. Cooke, Lawrence A. Johnson, Bertram K. Little, Janet R. MacFarlane, Josephine H. Peirce, George M. Simmons, Roscoe W. Smith, Frank K. Swain and Mrs. W. B. Wolcott. Officers elected for the coming year are: Edward Durell, President; George M. Simmons, James A. Keillor and Loring McMillen, Vice-Presidents; Josephine H. Peirce, Treasurer; Janet R. MacFarlane, Secretary. Plans were discussed for the fall meeting to be held in Williamsburg October 30 through November 1st. The matter of the E.A.I.A. library was placed in the hands of a committee composed of Loring McMillen, Lawrence Romaine and M. W. Thomas, Jr.

At the meeting of Directors and Officers held at 8:30 on Saturday, charter members were made life members. Plans for the Williamsburg meeting were thoroughly discussed, and plans were made for membership promotion. Members were asked to submit articles for *The Chronicle* to the editor, M. W. Thomas, Jr., Williamsburg, Va.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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## A YANKEE CARPENTER AND HIS TOOLS

BY LAWRENCE B. ROMAINE

In 1827, a carpenter of the town of Middleborough, Mass., Amasa W. Thompson by name took the trouble to make a complete list of his tools and their cost. A note on the front cover of the small 4 page manuscript, indicates he started to set himself up in business in 1827, and apparently acquired the equipment he considered necessary by 1832 at a total cost of \$138.94.

With this delightful list of tools, many of which most of us never heard of, are four complete plans and specifications for houses about 1835-1840, and a letter from a friend advising Mr. Thompson that there was a building boom in Portland, Maine and that he had better catch the boat and look into the situation where "good carpenters are at a premium and wages are now up to \$26 a month and keep." Consider—take two ten dollar bills, a five and a one and look at them closely—where will they be tomorrow? Yet the best of our Yankee artisans in 1830 considered such wages worthy of attention, nay of moving their families and homes—such wages were news of the first water.

These workmen had more tools than we dream of today, and what is more, they knew how to use them. In this day and age, one electrical tool does the work of ten or twenty, in say one hundredth of the time just for a rough picture. Not being a craftsman I won't say the work is not as good, but I can say that it has most surely lost all romance and charm, at least for me. One man spent a week and perhaps 25 tools in the task of constructing one good mantel or one good pipe box. Take a look at the examples now preserved in our museums and compare it with the copies and reproductions that have been thrown together by pressing an electric button. Perhaps I am odd and queer, but frankly, I rather like the role. To hear someone say "But it must be old; look at the crude workmanship" is all I need to know they are examining a good fake, so-called. The men of whom I write were craftsmen and their work was not crude except that their tools now and then did leave evidence of individual taste.

I think Mr. Thompson's list will bear reprinting in addition to the illustration, and give it in full:

Outside cover: "Amasa T. Thompson Bill of Carpenter's Tools. Jany. 14, 1832. The within bills of tools amounts to \$138.94 3¼ days on Caswell's sashes; at Lyons 5 small windows; & 3 sashes of full windows."

1827.

1 set bench planes	\$6.00
1 Broad Axe	3.00
1 Adze	2.25
1 Panel saw	1.50
1 Panel saw	1.58
1 fine do-	1.58
1 Drawing knife	.46
1 Trying square	.93
1 Shingling hatchet	.50
1 Hammer	.50
1 Rabbit plane	.83
1 Halving do	.50

1 Mortising chisel 7/8	25
" Large series driver	1.00
" for small clamps	.50
" for spring dividers	.92
" Do nippers	.20
" Mortising chisel 1/2 inch	.25
" Oval & Astrigal 7/8	1.25
" Scotia & Astrigal 7/8	1.00
" Noseing	1.00
" for Hollowing rounds	1.55
" Gage 1/2 inch	1.00
" Astrigal 7/8 inch	1.00
" Bit	.15
" Beed 1/2 inch	.83
" Claw hammer	.67
" Fillister	2.50
2 Beeds at 5/8	1.83
1 for Quirk tools	1.50
" Side Rabbit plane	.83
" Box plane	2.12
" Quirk Oval & Beed	1.25
" Rabbit plane	.92
" Large steel tongued square	1.71
" Saw & Pad	.67
" for Fine Stones	.50
" small trying square	.50
	<hr/> 25.87

A Portion of the Amasa Thompson Manuscript

## The Chronicle

1 Oil stone	.42	1 Backed fine saw	1.25
1 Small trying square	.48	1 Inch augre	.50
1 pareing chisel	.37	1 pr. dividers or compasses-	.71
1 Screw driver	.29	1 Panel saw for spliting	2.75
1 Bench screw	.75	1 Tennon guage	1.42
1 Box rule	.50	1 Bevel	.84
1 3/4 Augre	.41	1 Bradd Hammer	.50
11 Gouges	1.19	1 <i>Architect Book-</i>	6.50
13 Chisels	1.17	1 Case Mathematical Instruments.-	3.62 1/2
1 small iron vice	.52	1 Panel saw	2.75
1 pr. Hollow Rounds	.86	1 Grafting saw	1.00
4 Framing chisels	1.05	1 Bench screw	1.00
1 Grove plough & Irons-Sold at 4.50	5.00	1 Stamp	2.50
1 Sash plane for 1 1/4 stuff.	1.50	1 Double joint rule	.62 1/2
1 Copeing plane	.67	1 Sash saw	1.12 1/2
1 Bead 1/4-	.75	1 Oil Cann	.17
1 Bead 3/4-	1.00	1 Brace & 36 straw cold bits	9.00
1 Rabbit (Sold at .92)	.92	1 Window Frame tool	4.00
1 Smooth plane	1.50	1 Blind tool	1.33
1 Strike Block	.92	1 Glue Kettle	.62 1/2
1 Compass saw	.42	1 Grindstone without crank.	1.75
6 Guages	1.83	1 Machine for whetting saws.	.75
1 Dust brush	.25	1 Tennoning machine	4.50
1 Rasp, or wood file.	.25	Drafting board and square Bevel-	1.25
1 Augre 2 in.	.76	1 Noseing sash plane with templets	4.50
1 Augre 1 in.	.40	& copes.	2.17
1 Do 3/4	.30	1 pr. clamps for clamping doors.	7.50
1 Spoke shave	.50	1 Set Bench Planes—double irons.-	6.25
1 Bevel-	.25	1 Grindstone 300 lbs @	.37 &
1 Box rule.	.84	1 Stove for shop-\$7.25, one elbow.	11.62
1 Iron square	1.42	40 lbs second hand pipe \$4.00	2.00
1 Box rule	1.25	1 Bed moulding	.17
1 Spur Rabbit (Sold-1.17)-	1.33	1 Pr. shears for cutting tin.-	10.75
1 Pannel plane	1.25	1 Morticing Machine	1.13
1 Sash plane	1.25	1 Grecian Ovilo	.67
1 pr. Match planes	2.25	1 3/16 beed	2.25
1 Two inch chisel or firmer-	.42	1 Spirit level	
1 Morticing chisel 3/8	.25		
1 Large screw driver	1.00		
1 Pr. small clamps	.50		
1 pr. Spring dividers	.92		
1 do-nippers	.20		
1 Morticing chisel 1/2 in.	.28		
1 Ovilo & Ostrigal 3/4-	1.25		
1 Scotia & Ostrigal 3/8-	1.08		
1 Noseing-	1.08		
1 Pr. Hollow & rounds	1.33		
1 Ogee- 1/2 inch	1.00		
1 Ostrigal 7/8 inch	1.00		
1 Bit-	.15		
1 Beed 1/2 inch	.83		
1 Claw hammer	.67		
1 Fillister	2.50		
2 Beeds at 3/8	1.83		
1 Pair Quirk tools	1.50		
1 Side Rabbit plane.	.83		
1 Large steel tongued sq.	1.71		
1 Saw & Pad	.67		
1 pr. fire stones	.50		
1 small trying sq.	.50		
1 Set Bench planes double ironed	6.00		
without smooth plane.			
1 Bench screw	.75		

One of the most interesting entries to me is, of course, the "Architect's Book" and I wonder if it is our friend Asher Benjamin, which of his five titles, and what edition. Did he buy a second hand copy of the 1797 "Country Builders' Assistant" or was it merely a new copy of the "Practical House Carpenter," Boston 1830? I am not sure of the original price of either though I can find various advertisements for them in other contemporary volumes.

I have included a few duplicates to show the extent of what constituted a full compliment, and yet left out one or two identical items such as an extra bench screw, another drawing knife, a bit, another grafting saw and some more stove pipe. I feel sure the picture is quite complete, but didn't want you to add it up and feel that I had short-changed you. I hope this list is as imposing as it sounds to me.

**EDITORS' NOTE:** *Your Editors feel that inventories such as the one presented in the above article are extremely valuable and quite rare. As Mr. Romaine has indicated the study of such inventories are necessary if we are to reconstruct in this day and age the atmosphere and understanding of the early American craftsman.*

## Early American Industries

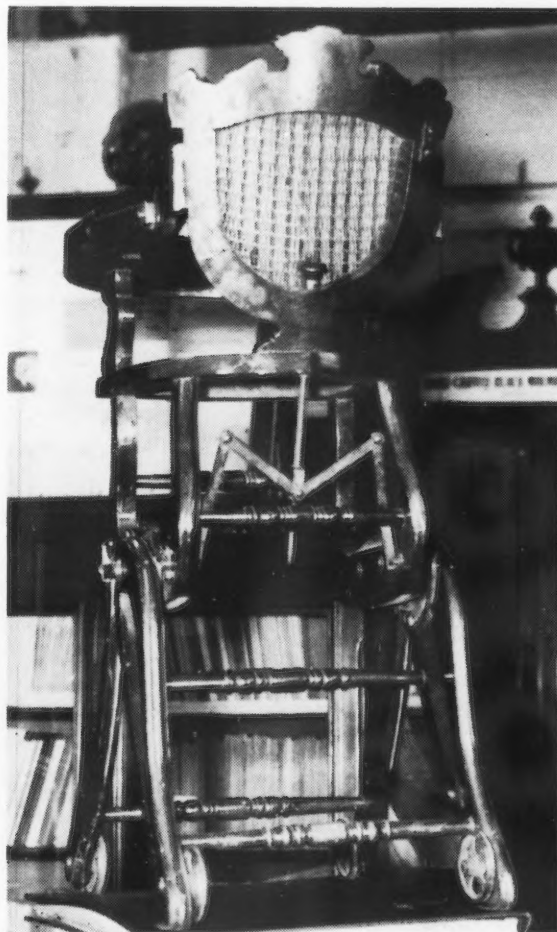
### THE ADAM FINGER HIGH CHAIR

Page 35

By FRANK CETIN

Back in 1856 a man by the name of Adam Finger built a high chair in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which is far more modern than any high chair being manufactured today. It stands approximately four feet high, was hand made, and through a simple and yet ingenious sprocket arrangement, can be collapsed into four different positions. Simply by pulling a knob on the back of the chair and positioning a rod in a different hole in the sprocket, this high chair can be lowered into a play chair, a stroller or a rocker.

According to Mr. Theodore Mueller, curator of the Milwaukee County Historical Society Museum where the chair is now on display, Adam Finger built this chair when his first child was born. At that time it became so popular, that Mr. Finger began making other chairs for his friends. As a result he started a good paying business. This particular chair, believed to be the only one still in existence, was used in the Finger family for four generations, until it was donated to the museum by Mrs. Russell Wilcox, a descendant of the Finger family.



*A back view of the chair in the high chair position, showing the simple arrangement which determines the position the chair will be in. A rod with a knob on the top end extends down through a string spring, and through an M type bracket. Small, iron rods are riveted to the bottoms of the legs of the M, go through the base of the chair and fit into a hole in the sprocket gears. Pulling up on the knob draws the M together, which draws the legs together, which pulls the rods out of the holes and allows the gears to mesh. The meshing gears automatically draw the chair into a lower position, until the rods reach and fall into the next holes, locking the chair in place.*



*The Adam Finger high chair in the stroller position. The wheels are now on the ground, and the chair is low enough for the child's feet to touch the floor and propel the chair. Most of this chair was made from parts of old chairs, and the rest was hand made by Adam Finger who was a cabinet maker.*

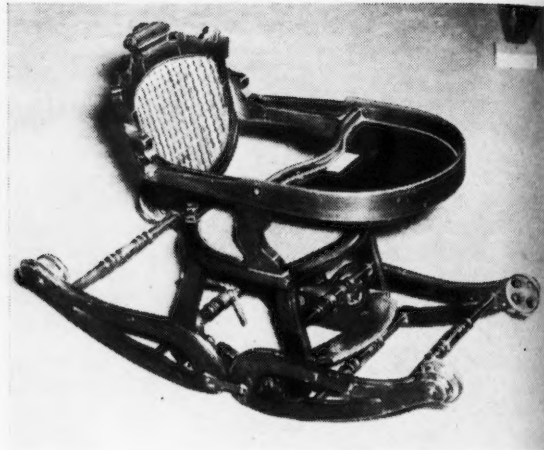


The chair is shown here in the high chair position. The legs now extend beyond the wheels about an eighth of an inch, making sure the chair will not roll away. The strip of metal shown across the tops of the two legs is held in place by two rivets which go through the legs, and through the centers of two sprocket gears, which is part of the raising and lowering mechanism. These gears have a series of holes drilled in them, and positioning an iron rod in one of the holes determines which position the chair will be in.

## THE WYCKOFF PUMP

(Continued from Page 29)

center of a long log which had first been seasoned. The ends of the pipe were then lipped to fit one into each other to form continuous sections, which, when the water flowed through the pipes swelled tight and made the joints inseparable. Larger pipe was made by cutting sections, say ten or twelve feet long, concave on the inside, convex on the out, much the same as you find the



This is the rocker position. The iron rod is now positioned in the last hole on the sprocket gear, and the chair is resting on the curve of the legs. Here too, the chair is low enough to allow the child to reach the floor with his feet, and thus he is able to rock himself. The finish on the chair is scuffed and scratched, but is the original finish, and it certainly doesn't look as if it were almost one hundred years old.

concentric sections of a grapefruit fitting toward the center. The pieces were joined together to form a perfectly round or circular pipe, the whole section then being rolled in tar, then banded with steel bands, rolled in sawdust and then left to cure. The ends were lipped as in the smaller sections for fitting into other sections.

The pump followed in a few years and was the answer to the rural water supply prayer. The pump never froze, brought the water to the surface quickly, and, withstood a great deal of abuse. Parts were easily obtainable, and, in contradistinction to metal pumps, could be repaired at home with little or no trouble. Of course the farmer always kept a long fishing line "handy by" to snag the chain when it broke, as it sometimes did. And thereby hangs many a winter's tale! I was tactless enough to say to a farmer who had just finished a bout with a broken pump chain one time a few years ago, "You know, my great grandfather invented these pumps, and we manufactured them for nearly one hundred years." The farmer looked at me pityingly a few moments and then said, "Hm! Well, all right, you can depend on me, I won't tell anybody." Sometimes the Wyckoff pump could be as cantankerous as an old mule, and twice as cranky.

I suppose as people buy these old pumps they will begin to get scarce. They might even become rare. And who knows—even then collectors' items! They may even be made into lamps—they are the only thing under the heavens to have escaped so far—but when that happens and that day comes, the well will really have been pumped dry.



